

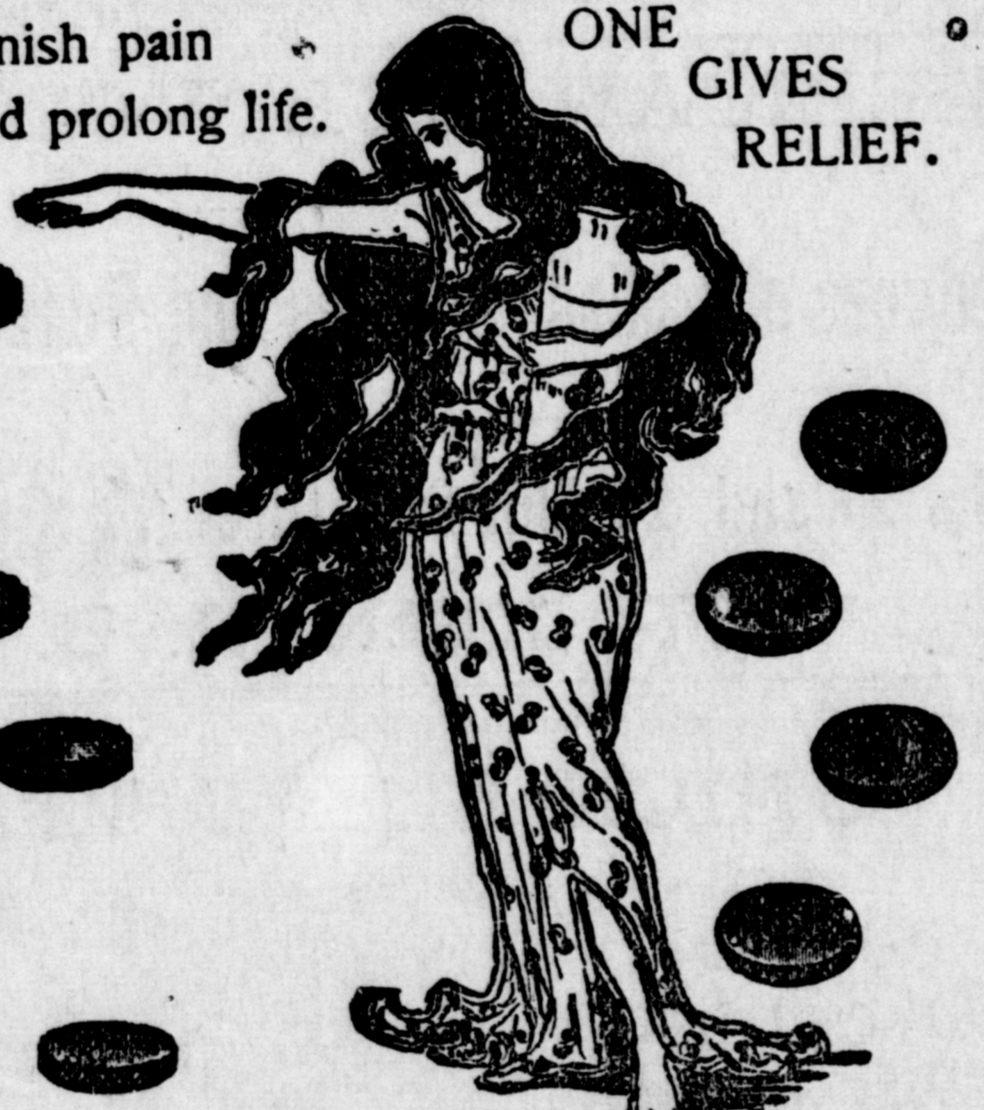
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TEMPERANCE COLUMN.
Contributed by the Woman's Christian Temperance Union of Hampstead, N. B.
Rise up ye Women that are at Ease
ONE SCENE OUT OF MANY.
It was a dreary miserable morning, a heavy fog hung over the wretched street; the rain had fallen continually through the night and still drizzled in a forlorn way. Pedestrians jostled along, occasionally hitting one another with their wet umbrellas and slashing the mud right and left over the dirty pavement. Crossing the filthy street, where the thick, black mud entered the soles of her shoes, and clung with tenacity about her thin ankles, was a young girl of thirteen or thereabouts. She breast the driving wind and swerved not but the straight course ahead, although her protection against the elements was only a ragged dress and a thin faded shawl of many colors. Tied about her untidy mass of hair was an old hood, and upon her feet were an old one-sided shoe, unlaced and torn at the top, and a coarse discarded boot, hard and unwieldy. She seemed utterly indifferent to the rain. Why should she be otherwise? For one who is thoroughly wet and worn a few drops more or less either of water or trouble makes little difference.
She hurried around the corner and a shiver passed through her frame with a cutting blast of wind. She shuffled on as fast as possible, considering her soaked feet, held her poor wet garments close to her as if for protection, turned up a dark coat, opened a creaking door in a rickety tenement house and entered. How cold and dark and damp, although just what she expected. A deep sigh escaped her. The "bundle of rags" (called father) on the straw in the corner did not move, and she softly opened the door into another smaller room and looked in. All was hushed and still. On a low couch of straw, covered with a thin, patched army quilt, lay a little girl of seven, pale and faded; but, though the clammy sweat stood upon her brow, one could not but say, "How lovely." Yes, though a drunkard's forsaken child, Lena Croft's pinched features were beautiful. Amy knelt down by her side, took the little thin hand in her own, and poor child although she did not intend to wake her sick sister, the hot tears that fell from her eyes had that effect, and the little one's eyes opened and looked upon her imploringly. She had begged her father, with all the strength and pathos of her anguish, to call a physician for Lena, even getting down upon her knees before the degraded man with her earnest pleading; but no, this heartless father turned away from his eldest child, and God's blessing would have brought relief to his sick child, and gave it to the rum seller, who was licensed to flood his home with poverty, hunger and perhaps something worse.
"I am so glad you've come, Amy, I'm so hungry. Can I have something now?" Amy looked at the thin cheek so touchingly white, at the blue eyes that once beamed with laughter, and her heart sunk within her. She felt such a weight of oppression that she could not speak. She had promised to get something for the sick child and had failed. She had rung at many basement doors, but the servants had bade her begone. She had come back empty-handed and broken-hearted. She could not resist this appeal.
"You may, dearie. You shall, my little lamb. Just wait a minute," she cried, and again she bounded out (that freezing, wet, starving child), resolved that she would ring the front door bells and see the ladies themselves, as a last resort.
Thinking only of Lena, her poor, tired feet seemed shod with wings. She hurried through the streets and rung the front door bell of the first respectable house. A tidy housemaid opened the door, and in answer to Amy's pleadings "Please may I see the lady?" she received "You dirty girl, to come up these clean steps with your dirty feet. Begone this instant," and the door was slammed in her face. She turned despairingly but resolutely (the sad eyes at home haunting her) and pulled the next bell. As the servant opened the door Amy said quickly, "My little sister is starving, please give me something for her."
"Beggars should go to back doors," angrily answered the girl, and was about to shut the door when a gentle voice said, "Let her step in on the oilcloth so that I can see her."
"But, sure, she's drippin' wet, ma'am, and covered with mud."
"Do as I say. Let her in."
The door was opened and Amy stepped in.
"Oh, how lovely," thought the poor out-cast, "how bright and how lovely everything is," and her eyes wandered to the sweet-voiced invalid lying upon the crimson hall-couch.
"My poor girl, what can I do for you?"
"O ma'am, something for my sister. My poor little sister is sick and dyin' and starvin'."
"Poor child, poor little girl. Katy tell the cook to give her part of my beef tea in a bottle, a cup of jelly and some bread and meat, and be quick about it." The poor girl received the package

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Upper Hampstead April 25th, 1899.

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